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C.I.A. Aide Says Agency Will Let Scholars Acknowledge Backing

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Feb. 13 — A senior official of the Central Intelligence Agency said tonight that the agency had relaxed rules that had barred professors from publicly acknowledging the C.I.A.'s support for their research.

Robert M. Gates, deputy director of the agency in charge of intelligence, said at Harvard that such arrangements could still be kept secret by the scholar involved or by the agency if the C.I.A. decided its "formal association" with the topic would damage the United States.

His appearance here came against a backdrop of growing controversy at Harvard and elsewhere over the intelligence agency's relationship with campuses. Two months ago a report by an official at Harvard concluded that a senior professor there, Nadav Safran, then director of the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, had violated university rules when he organized a conference on Islamic fundamentalism, sponsored by the C.I.A. at Harvard last fall, without telling the conferees of the agency's role.

New Case Is Reported

Meanwhile, The Harvard Crimson reported today that Prof. Samuel P. Huntington, director of the university's Center for International Affairs, did not inform Harvard officials in 1984 when he began doing research that was financed by the C.I.A. while he headed the university's government department.

That research resulted in a report to the agency that appears in condensed form in the current issue of the journal International Security in an article entitled "Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs." Professor Huntington's co-author was Richard K. Betts, a visiting professor of government at Harvard and a fellow of the Brookings Institution in Washington. Professor Huntington was on his way to the Middle West today to give a lecture and would be difficult to reach, his office said.

The actual research contract was between the C.I.A. and Mr. Betts. In a telephone interview from Washington, Mr. Betts said he had been paid by the C.I.A. and that he, in turn, had paid Professor Huntington. Mr. Betts declined to say how much money these payments involved.

'Courage Is Called For'

Harvard officials say Mr. Gates was invited to appear here by Graham Allison, dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Effective immediately, Mr. Gates said, professors will be permitted to acknowledge getting C.I.A. funds if they also include a statement stressing that the views in the article or book are those of the author, not the United States Government.

He said participants in conferences paid for by the C.I.A., such as the one at Harvard directed by Mr. Safran, would now be explicitly informed by the agency about its sponsorship.

Harvard's published guidelines on C.I.A. research require that faculty members publicly disclose C.I.A. financing when the research is conducted under the aegis of Harvard. In such cases, Harvard demands a large portion of the grant to cover overhead.

When faculty members become private consultants to the C.I.A., either directly or indirectly, they are required by Harvard's guidelines to "report in writing the existence of such an arrangement" to their faculty dean, "who should then inform the president of the university."

Mr. Gates said the C.I.A. was sensitive to the concerns of some professors about academic freedom resulting from the agency's sponsorship of research and conferences. But he also said professors who wanted to work with the C.I.A. should not be frightened off by adverse publicity. "Consultations in cooperation with C.I.A. on the problems this nation faces abroad do not threaten academic freedom," he said at one point in the address..

"At some point, courage is called for," Mr. Gates said. "The freedom of those who do not wish to consult with us can be infringed upon by the fears of their colleagues. We do not believe that working with government to help bring about better informed policy is shameful; indeed, it should be a source of pride and satisfaction."

Mr. Gates said the long history of cooperation between the C.I.A. and universities, particularly Harvard, was interrupted during the domestic turmoil over Vietnam, but resumed in the last decade as the agency faced increasingly diverse demands for research and analysis.

He said the C.I.A. sought out academic experts to sharpen its analysis of world issues, not subvert or change the course of debate in universities. "We are looking for people to challenge our views, to argue with us, to criticize our assessments constructively, to make us think and defend and to go back to the drawing board when we have missed something important," he said in the speech.

The C.I.A. official said criticism aroused by the Safran case had forced the C.I.A. to examine its policies for dealing with professors. Mr. Safran also received a \$107,000 grant from the agency for research that led to publication of his latest book. He told Harvard about the grant, as required by university rules, but in the book he did not acknowledge the financing.

At Least 'Some Change'

"As a result of the controversy here at Harvard and expression of concern about this policy, we re-examined this issue with considerable care," said Mr. Gates. "We have decided that our interest in obtaining the cooperation of this country's scholars and allaying the misunderstandings and suspicions that have grown out of our earlier approach warrants at least some change in our policy."